

# THE *new* Waveny

## A Spotlight on Staff who Define our Culture

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Long-time Waveny CNA, Bevon Walford's career path reads like a road-map. It shows everything it takes for a good employee to evolve into a great leader. "They call me Mr. Waveny, at times," he says. "I'm proud of that, because I love what I do."

In his 13 years at Waveny, Bevon has been the common denominator amid a lot of change. Throughout times of transition and status quo alike, the leadership he has demonstrated in his official role as CNA Team Leader at The Village (and in his unofficial role as a mentor to his peers) has been a lot like a ship's compass. He leads by example, showing how to best stay the course, on behalf of The Village's residents. "They help me as much as I help them. I can't tell you that I've ever gone home feeling bad about what I've done," he says.



**Bevon Walford**  
CNA & TEAM LEADER  
THE VILLAGE

While Bevon is regarded as a natural at what he does, how he landed in healthcare was hardly a direct path. When his family moved here from Jamaica when he was 17, he says a new world of opportunities opened for him. "I don't think there's any job I haven't done!" he says, only half kidding, since he's worked in sectors ranging from factories to retail, seven years in the car rental business, and even received certification as an electronic technician. But it was while working as a home health aide that he realized caregiving was his true calling.

**"Look, listen, and you will learn. I learned this very early in life, but it's one of the most important things you can ever do."**

Bevon Walford

Despite a pessimistic instructor who suggested he not even try, Bevon was the only one in his class to not only pass, but ace his CNA exam. Shortly after, he arrived at Waveny – not as an employee, but as a private duty aide for a Care Center resident. "I ended up helping out with other residents along with my own, because I could," he said. "The CNAs told me I should apply to work here with them, and I did."

Bevon was hired per diem and worked every shift, but most often nights. With persistence, he waited for a part-time position to become available, and applied. "I had

to be patient, but it all worked out." Several months later when a full-time position opened, it was offered to him due to his visible commitment and dedication. As for his role as Team Leader, to this day Bevon remains uncertain

about its origin, other than knowing it was given to him for a reason. "One day I came to work, and saw the letters "TL" next to my name. I thought to myself 'what does that mean?' It was nothing I asked for, but I knew it must have been given to me based on what I did, and how I did it. So, "TL" is what I am to this day."

As is often the case in effective leadership, the "how" tends to outweigh the "what" in importance. The three guiding principles of Bevon's gentle approach – the "how" of his style – are simple but powerful:

**Number 1: Never Assume.** Just like how he defied the assumptions of his CNA course instructor years ago, this principle continues to guide Bevon's life and career. "You can never assume. Instead you should always ask," he says, especially when it comes to providing resident care. "Sometimes I hear people say, 'I should have known.' That's a silly thing to say, if you didn't bother to ask the question in the first place."

**Number 2: Pay Attention.** When asked what his trick is to the many things he does – whether bringing a smile or laugh to a resident, or calming down someone who is agitated – his answer is the same. "It's called paying attention," he says. "If you hear fussing, or if a resident doesn't seem like themselves, something as small as a tiny hand gesture can tell you everything you need to know. Look, listen, and you will learn."

**Number 3: Keep it Simple.** Like most things, Bevon says caregiving is best when you don't overcomplicate the situation. "Just like when you're cooking and you use every ingredient in the kitchen, it's the worst," he says. "The simplest approach is best. Be patient, be generous with your time, meet each resident where they are, and help them to hold on to what they can. It's simple." 🌈